

'BEING FREE TO COME TO JESUS AND SHARE OUR SADNESS'

19th Sunday Ordinary Time Year B. 2018

GOSPEL OF JOHN 6:41-51

A BLESSING & SADNESS

Sometimes we can feel tempted to give up on Chapter 6 of John's Gospel. Some might think it is too long, or repetitive, or not enough action. Yet Chapter 6 is a blessing as we take time to reflect on the gift Jesus offers and the sadness whenever someone walks away from that gift. In two weeks, we will hear, near the end of Chapter 6 that many do walk away from Jesus.

IMAGINE

Imagine yourself in John's community perhaps 60 to 70 years after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.

Celebrating the joy of the Gospel.
Celebrating God's love and friendship and abiding in God.
Yet also imagine the sadness that community felt,
when some people walked away, and many others weren't interested in joining.

This Sunday we hear again from Jesus

'I am the bread of life'.
'I am the living bread that came down from heaven'.

As we spend five consecutive Sundays listening to Chapter 6 unfold,
We have time to sit with the Gospel and be still with God.

SADNESS

We sit with this passage about people complaining about Jesus.
As we sit with Jesus, we might be graced to feel the sadness that Jesus felt.

The sadness that the Apostles felt.
The sadness that John's community felt.
The sadness we feel today
as many don't recognize the incredible gift being offered by God to them.

We can be sad about this, yet joyful in living our faith in Jesus.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS SADNESS FOR OTHERS?

FAMILIARITY

The Gospel passage continues:

'Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said,

'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'
They were saying,
'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?
How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?'
Jesus answered them, ***'Do not complain among yourselves.'***

Familiarity. Some of them do not move beyond the familiar.
Weighed down by daily expectations and pressures.
Not seeing the presence and depth of God's love in ordinary life.
A real **sadness**. Life being offered and not accepted wholeheartedly.
Jesus offers eternal life, and some will walk away from this gift.

Such an incredible gift being offered.
Jesus offering us Himself.

SEEING JESUS

Seeing Jesus in the depth of God's love,
Or seeing Jesus only in a superficial way.

Seeing Jesus as God the Father wants us to see him
Or seeing Jesus only as we want him to be.

Seeing Jesus in the freedom of God's love
Or trying to conform Jesus to our agenda and our desires.

The Gospel passage continues:

"No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me;
and I will raise that person up on the last day.
It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God."

The quote is from the prophet Isaiah 54:13
in the Septuagint Old Testament translation.
God is teaching them.
Here in John's Gospel we learn further that,
being taught by God the Father draws you to Jesus.
We come to Jesus.

Jesus says in the passage:

'Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me'.

How do we respond as the Father draws us deeper into life?
Jesus continues with the words:

'Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.'

Again, a sadness as we think of others missing this wonderful gift to believe.
Belief in Jesus leads us into life forever.

The Gospel passage continues:

*'Whoever eats of this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'*

A question was posed earlier in the homily:
WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS SADNESS FOR OTHERS?

Especially for people in our own families and lives.
But also, for others we have never met.

We take that sadness into our prayer, into our time with God.
Into our petitions to God.
Into our stillness with God.

The Christian life is a joyful life.
But that doesn't mean that are immune to the pain of others.
We care. We love.

**And we bring our caring, our loving others, our sadness,
with us as we come to Jesus.**
**And we bring into prayer,
our own sadness for our failures and sinfulness
and for the times we haven't loved as deeply as we could.**

We go humbly into conversation with Jesus, bringing that sadness.
And after being still with Jesus,
waiting on Jesus, listening and feeling,
we discover that **Jesus is deeply aware of our sadness**
and **Jesus responds to us and graces us.**
Our joy is in Jesus. Humbly, we are joyful.
And we find the prompts of the Holy Spirit
leading us forward to care and love more deeply.

Jesus is the Bread of Life that nourishes us and sustains us.
Thank you Jesus.
Amen.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/081218.cfm>]
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